

**ABSTRACT**

A method is provided for dividing a pattern into a plurality of sub-patterns, each sub-pattern being adapted for use with an image search method that can provide a plurality of sub-pattern search results. The method represents the pattern as a plurality of feature points, generates candidate partitions of the plurality of feature points, and then scores the candidate partitions by examining characteristics of each potential sub-pattern of each candidate partition. The highest-scoring partition is selected, and then it is applied to the plurality of feature points, creating one or more sub-pluralities of features. The invention advantageously provides a plurality of sub-patterns where each sub-pattern contains enough information to be located with a feature-based search method, where that information has been pre-evaluated as being useful and particularly adapted for running feature-based searches.